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Transcription of Germantown Friends' Protest Against Slavery, 1688

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Transcription of Germantown Friends' Protest Against Slavery, 1688

This is to y^e Monthly Meeting held at Richard Warrell's.

These are the reasons why we are against the traffick of men Body, as followeth: Js there any that would be done or handled at this manner? viz., to be sold or made a slave for all the time of his life? How fearfull & fainthearted are many on sea when they see a strange vassel, being afraid it should be a Turck, and they should be tacken and sold for slaves into Turckey. Now what is this better done as Turcks doe? yea rather is it worse for them, w^{ch} say they are Christians; for we hear that ye most part of such Negers are brought heither against their will & consent; and that many of them are stollen. Now tho' they are black, we can not conceive there is more liberty to have them slaves, as it is to have other white ones. There is a saying, that we shall doe to all men, licke as we will be done our selves; macking no difference of what generation, descent or Colour they are. And those who steal or robb men, and those who buy or purchase them, are they not all alike? Here is liberty of Conscience, w^{ch} is right & reasonable; here ought to be likewise liberty of y^e body, except of evildoers, w^{ch} is an other case. But to bring men hither, or to robb and sell them against their will, we stand against. In Europe there are many oppressed for Conscience sacke; and here there are those oppressed w^{ch} are of a black Colour. And we, who know that men must not comitt adultery, some doe comitt adultery in others, separating wives from their housbands and giving them to others; and some sell the children of those poor Creatures to other men. Oh! doe consider well this things, you who doe it; if you would be done at this manner? and if it is done according Christianity? You surpass Holland & Germany in this thing. This mackes an ill report in all those Countries of Europe, where they hear off, that y^e Quackers doe here handel men licke they handel there y^e Cattel. And for that reason some have no mind or inclination to come hither. And who shall maintaine this your cause or plaid for it? Truly we can not do so, except you shall inform us better hereoff, viz: that christians have liberty to practise this things. Pray! What thing in the world can be done worse towards us, then if men should robb or steal us away, & sell us for slaves to strange

Countries, separating housband from their wife & children! Being now this is not done at that manner, we will be done it, therefore we contradict & are against this traffick of menbody. And we who profess that it is not lawfull to steal, must likewise avoid to purchase such things as are stollen, but rather help to stop this robbing and stealing if possible; and such ought to be delivered out of y^e hands of y^e Robbers & and sett free as well as in Europe. Then is Pennsilvania to have a good report, in stead it hath now a bad one for this sacke in other Countries. Especially whereas y^e Europeans are desirous to know in what manner y^e Quackers doe rule in their Province; & most of them do loock upon us with an envious eye. But if this is done well, what shall we say, is done evill?

If once these slaves, (:w^{ch} they say are so wicked and stubborn men:) should joint themselves, fight for their freedom and handel their masters & mastrisses as they did handel them before; will these Masters and mastrisses tacke the sword at hand & warr against these poor slaves, licke we are able to belive, some will not refuse to doe? Or have these Negers not as much right to fight for their freedom; as you have to keep them slaves?

Now consider well this thing, if it is good or bad? and in case you find it to be good to handel these blacks at that manner, we desire & require you hereby lovingly, that you may informe us here in, which at this time never was done, viz., that Christians such a Liberty to do so. to the end we shall be satisfied in this point, & satisfie likewise our good friends & acquaintances in our natif Country, to whose it is a terrour or fairfull thing that men should be handeld so in Pensilvania.

This is from our Meeting at Germantown held y^e 18. of the 2. month 1688. to be delivred to the Monthly Meeting at Richard Warrel's.

garret henderichs
derick op de graeff
Francis Daniell Pastorius
Abraham op Den graef.

at our monthly meeting at Dublin, y^e 30—2 mo: 1688 we having inspected y^e matter above mentioned & considered of it, we finde it so weighty that we think it not Expedient for vs to meddle with it here, but do Rather comitt it to y^e consideration of y^e Quarterly meeting; y^e tennor of it being nearly Related to y^e truth.

On behalfe of y^e monthly meeting.

Signed, P Jo: Hart.

This, above mentioned was Read in our quarterly meetting at Philadelphia, The 4th of y^e 4th mo 88 and was from thence recommended to the Yearly Meetting and the abovesaid Derick and the other two mentioned therein to present the same to y^e Abovesaid meeting it being a thing of too great A weight for this meeting to determine.

Signed by order of y^e meeting

Anthony Morris.

(Based on text in Marion Dexter Learned, *The Life of Francis Daniel Pastorius: The Founder of Germantown* [Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1908], 261–62.)

***1431-89-21-8**

There to ye Monthly Meeting held at Richard Mearns.
 These are the reasons why we are against the traffick of men
 as followeth. Is there any that would be done or minded at this
 manner? viz to be sold or made a slave for all the time of his life
 How fearful & fardhearted are many on sea when they see a strange
 vessel. being afraid it should be a Turk and they should be taken
 and sold for Slaves into Turkey. Now what is this better done
 in Turkey? yea rather is it worse for them, w^{ch} say they are Christian
 for we hear that ye most part of these Slaves are brought heathen
 against their will & consent and that many of them are solden.
 Now tho they are black we can not conceive there is more liberty
 to have them slaves, as it is to have o^r white ones. There is a
 saying that we shall doe to all men, like as we will be done
 our selves, making no difference of what generation, descent or
 Colour they are. And those who steal or rob men, and those who buy
 or purchase them, are they not all alike? Here is liberty of Con-
 science, w^{ch} is right & reasonable, here ought to be likewise liberty
 of ye Body, except of Conscience, w^{ch} is an other case. But to bring
 men hither, or to rob and sell this against their will, we stand against.
 In Europe there are many oppressed for Conscience sakes, and here there
 are those oppressed w^{ch} are of a black colour. And we w^{ch} know
 that men must not commit adultery, how doe we commit adultery in this
 separating wives from their husbands and giving them to others
 and some sell the children of those poor creatures to other men.
 Oh! we comfort w^{ch} this things you who doe it, if you would be
 done at this manner! and if it is done according to Conscience?
 You surpass Holland & Germany in this thing. This makes
 an ill report in those countries of Europe where they hear off
 that the Quakers here trade men like they traded them.
 ye Quakers here have no mind or inclination
 to come hither. And who shall maintain this your trade?
 paid for it? Truly we can not do so except you shall
 inform us better thereof, viz that Christians have liberty
 to gratify this thing. Any what thing in the world can be
 done w^{ch} towards as then if men should rob or steal is any
 thing for slaves to strange countries, separating husband
 from their wives & children. Being now this is not done
 that manner, we will be done, & therefore we contradict & are
 against this traffick of men. And we who profess

The Germantown Protest against Slavery, 1688 (from Marion Dexter Learned, *The Life of Francis Daniel Pastorius: The Founder of Germantown* [Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1908], after p. 262).

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